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AUTHOR	Gordon, Edmund W.; Miller, Julia Wang
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ABSTRACT

"Planning Educational Change: Vol. III, Integrating the Desegregated School," by Chesler, Jorgensen, and Frenberg is reviewed in this issue of the "NCRIEEO Newsletter." The book in question tries to provide teachers and administrators with methods for improving race relations in desegregated schools. Some of the techniques suggested include role playing for students, sensitivity sessions for teachers, and diagnosis of school sentiment through the use of questicnnaires. The reviewers suggest that discussion of basic issues might enhance educators' understanding of the problems involved in school desegregation. Also discussed are organizational strategies for planning desegregation such as pairing, school closing, open enrollment, and educational parks. In conclusion, the reviewers note that the requirement for the proper utilization of the ideas in "Planning Educational Change" is a commitment to work toward the achievement of a racially integrated society. This issue of the "NCRIEEO Newsletter" also lists recent works (documents as well as journal articles) on equal educational opportunity. For the book reviewed, see ED 042 071. (JW)

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Planning Educational Change:

Vol. III, Integrating The Desegregated School

A Review

by

Edmund W. Gordon, Ed. D.

and

Julia Wang Miller

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NCRIEEO

The National Center for Research and Information on Equal Educational Opportunity (NCRIEEO), provides access to an enormous body of reusable experience and usable information contained, often buried, in an infinite variety of documents. Included are many documents readily available, having been published in well advertised and celebrated books, journals, and reports. Many others are much less available and of limited circulation even among those who would find them most useful. Still others are furtive, sometimes "underground" documents, unavailable to the general reader or educator and hard to come by for almost all readers. These speeches, private reports, proposals, program descriptions, status reports, and memoranda contain much information which would be of great value to those concerned with "quality" education and with the prognosis for American public education in general – if they were readily available. The analysis and synthesis of such information on desegregation in public education from all sources is abstracted, indexed, summarized, evaluated, and made easily available through the National Center for Research and Information on Equal Educational Opportunity.

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Direct inquires to:

NCRIEEO
Box 40
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, New York 10027

(212) 870-4804

Edmund W. Gordon, Ed. D.
Director

Wendell J. Roye, M. S.
Assistant Director

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INTEGRATING THE DESEGREGATED SCHOOL

Mark Chesler, Carl Jorgensen, and Phyllis Erenberg

Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge

The University of Michigan

A Review

By

Edmund W. Gordon, Ed.D. and Julia Wang Miller

REVIEW

Since the Supreme Court decision of 1954 (*Brown vs Board of Education*), the literature on desegregation has proliferated in response to the need for continual evaluation of progress and development of new strategies for advancing ethnic integration in the schools. The enormity of the problem and of all the delicate questions that surround it leaves room for diverse approaches and analyses; but recent research[1] establishes with great force the association between ethnic segregation and low achievement for low status groups on the one hand, and ethnic integration and improved achievement for these groups on the other.

ABSTRACT

The objective of this work is to provide teachers and administrators with methods for improving race relations in desegregated schools. The general discussion on planning for integration is broken down into the following chapters: (1) "Achieving Racial Integration in Schools," (2) "Diagnosing the Potential for Change," (3) "The Roles of the Classroom Teacher," (4) "Facilitating Positive Racial Relations: The Teacher's Role," (5) "Academic Instruction: The Teacher's Role," (6) "The Roles of the School Principal," (7) "The Principal and Student Involvement," (8) "The Principal and Community Support," (9) "Principal and the Professional Staffs," (10) "Training Program for Teachers and Principals," (11) "Changing Professional Roles and Structures," and (12) "Bibliographic Summary." More specific suggestions are explored in the appendixes, for example, "Role Playing in Class," "Curriculum on Racism," and "Diagnosis of School-wide Sentiment." As a practical manual or guide, this work suggests that imaginative methods can improve race relations and therefore education as well; but that the burden of action still lies with administrators and teachers.

That equal educational opportunity is necessary from a legal and moral point of view cannot now be seriously questioned; essential for this equalization is the elimination of forced ethnic separation. What is needed, then, are viable methods and strategies for bringing about the kind of education that will allow for individual determination of options rather than determination according to race or class; and the kind of education that creates cooperative interaction among diverse groups.

It is to the pragmatics of school integration that Chesler, Jorgensen, and Erenberg's manual, *Planning Educational Change: Integrating the Desegregated Schools*, addresses itself. More specifically, the objective is to provide teachers and administrators with methods for improving race relations and therefore education in desegregated schools. Because this work helps to fill a gap in the literature which is of immediate concern, it performs a much needed service. Many of the techniques suggested for facilitating race relations seem quite promising. For example, role playing for students is a method teachers can use to help students explore and modify their attitudes and sources of racial conflict. Once hostility, fear or simple apprehension are acted out, students can diagnose their causes and effects and, in the process, modify their behavior. Another technique is the encounter group ("sensitivity sessions") in which teachers are encouraged to express their racial attitudes and to examine problems they face in the classroom. In these sessions where feelings are more freely expressed and analyzed, the opportunities for change and the development of coping strategies are enhanced. In addition, diagnosing school or classroom sentiment through the use of questionnaires is a method for administrators and teachers to keep in touch with the undercurrent of emotions which might otherwise go undetected and erupt into crisis situations.

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The most radical methods entail restructuring academic and social relationships in order to accommodate the needs of the minority as well as the majority-group students. For example, curriculum changes to include subjects such as the origins of racism or black history should serve the multiple purposes of intellectual development, broadened cultural awareness for the majority, and positive ethnic identity for the minority. Most important, curriculum changes alone are not sufficient if time during the school day is not set aside for imaginative programs for students and training sessions for teachers in which human relations and ethnic content are the focus. Since approximately three hours per day of traditional academic work is adequate for most students, the rest of the school day can be devoted to freer forms of intellectual, social and political exploration. The authors also suggest such changes in instructional methods as team teaching, more varied teaching styles, experience-based learning, and less dependence on didactic information dissemination.

There are, however, limitations to *Planning Educational Change* which detract from its usefulness. Such innovations as are suggested demand a kind of detailed description and explanation which is not found in this work. The administrator or teacher may not have enough information to make him feel sufficiently confident to implement these new methods; although the manual provides possible leads and identifies some strategies, it leaves to the reader the task of developing detailed procedures. In addition, it seems logical to expect a manual on pragmatics to establish, however briefly, a foundation in the underlying issues since lack of understanding or belief in integrated education may prevent an administrator or teacher from acting in earnest. Even if a discussion of the value of integrated education or the political economy of desegregation is not included, what is necessary is a transition from such issues to proposed techniques. In other words, the methods themselves should be grounded in an explicit, rather than implied, understanding of the problems involved as well as justifiable in terms of effectiveness.

Since collective experience in desegregated education has been limited in time and scope, it is hardly surprising that basic issues are not yet fully resolved, let alone questions of method. Yet there is a body of literature which educators can use to enhance their understanding of the issues, problems and contradictions involved in efforts to achieve ethnic integration in public schools. Among these basic issues are the relationships between (1) academic achievement and ethnic-economic desegregation, (2) self-concept (view of self as in control of destiny) and ethnic-economic segregation/desegregation, (3) performance (immediate productivity and aspects of psychological response) and differential perceptions of threat or support in ethnic-economic segregation/desegregation, (4) differential ratios of ethnic-economic group representation and academic achievement, and (5) differential ratios of ethnic-economic group representation and the maintenance of the balance essential to desegregation. In addition, there are problems such as (6) resegregation resulting from ability grouping, tracking and the exodus of whites from recently desegregated schools, (7) inflexibility of educational institutions and bureaucracies in the face of changed conditions and demands, (8) quality of education in settings where integrated education is impossible, and (9) demands upon the public school to become an instrument of social change, rather than a reflection of the society it serves. Some of the contradictions that arise are (10) national commitment to ethnic desegregation in the presence of pervasive and institutional racism and (11) a tradition of political action in support of desegregation in the face of a growing preoccupation with ethnic separatism and cultural nationalism.

In order to understand some of these background issues which Chesler, Jorgensen, and Erenberg do not discuss, Meyer Weinberg's *Integrated Education*, a collection of essays by educators and social scientists on specific experiences in desegregation as well as general problems, can be used as a companion piece. This anthology includes analyses of the political and economic forces affecting the progress of desegregation and the problems of pedagogy that arise. Areas of specific conflict concern *de facto* segregation in the classroom created by ability grouping, the breakdown of neighborhood schools under new desegregation plans, and compensatory programs for disadvantaged children. Most important, a number of articles discuss prospects for change with regard to professional reform, curriculum changes, organizational planning, legislation and judicial doctrine. In all cases, the movement for change is obstructed by the lack of initiative and the abundance of inertia inherent in existing bureaucratic and social structures. Of course, limited progress has been made, but not enough to offset cumulative effects. Continued reform as well as the contributions of research will hopefully combine to create greater understanding of the learning effects of deprivation and methods for altering them in integrated contexts. In addition, Weinberg in this anthology seeks to provide a wider perspective through a series of essays on racial problems in education abroad.

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Perhaps the most difficult to break down are psychological barriers to desegregation. From whites, resistance is caused by fear of change in "territory," etc.[2] On the other hand, minority-group parents often recognize desegregation as a better option for their children, but may worry over the strain on children when they face racial confrontation. The fear on both sides can be dissolved: whites can be reassured, and minority groups given confidence. As Pettigrew has pointed out,[3] racial roles and attitudes are defined and reinforced by sub-cultures and institutions. To break down racial attitudes, socially sanctioned contact must occur frequently, and opportunity to work toward common goals must be created. Once a school is desegregated and an atmosphere conducive to friendly interaction is created, many psychological barriers will disappear. In any case, to work for healthy racial exchange is to understand deep-seated differences in values. The white majority need not impose its middle-class attitudes on minority groups in order for truly integrated education to be a success.[4]

In between discussions of these underlying issues and the process of integrated education, it is necessary to consider the development of organizational structures to implement basic policy. Of course, before such structures are set up, an analysis of the specific political, economic and racial geography of the school district might prevent mistakes resulting from ignorance of particulars. The best strategy will be the one that fits the immediate situation and can accommodate future changes as well. The programs that have been proposed have met with varying degrees of success depending upon the reaction of the community and the wisdom of the administrators.

For smaller communities, *pairing* (The Princeton Plan) and *school closing* can be effective strategies for desegregation. Under the Princeton Plan, segregated schools are combined according to grade-level so that each school teaches only one grade; this allows for the redistribution of children in classrooms and can be coupled with organizational innovations such as team teaching. When a segregated school is closed, its students are assigned to surrounding schools. The closed school can then be used for a community center, library, etc.

In larger cities where desegregation is the most difficult to accomplish, *open enrollment* and *magnet schools* may shift the racial balance slightly, but will not change overall patterns. While both interim plans give a few students better options, they should not be substituted for a larger effort. Under the *open enrollment* plan, parents can request that their children be admitted to a school of their choice, the only limitation being that of space. However, it happens that only parents with higher aspirations or greater confidence in their children's social competence are likely to be the ones to request transfers; the inner-city schools tend to remain segregated. The *magnet school* plan is to convert an inner-city school into a specialized program to attract white middle-class students. The idea is that parents will send their children out of the neighborhood if they believe they will receive a superior education.

Perhaps the most promising in the long run are plans that require the *reorganization of basic educational units*. One such plan is to rearrange the boundaries of school districts into metropolitan school districts[5] so that greater varieties of children may be brought together in a single district and ultimately in the individual schools. The realization of this plan for a large metropolis is still in the offing although ambitious plans have been put forward.[6] One of the most successful applications of this plan (involving a relatively small number of units) has been in Berkeley, California, where desegregated classrooms on the elementary level have been generally accepted by the community, teachers and students.[7]

Educational parks have also been proposed to solve the problem in large urban centers. Once these complexes, able to house thousands of students, are built, students can be scheduled for special programs and teachers can better share skills and resources. The problem of creating a racial balance will be solved because the parks will include an area large enough to insure relative stability in ethnic and economic distribution of population. Although the parks' largeness allows for experimentation, it may also create problems such as alienation.

Except in some suburban or rural areas, the chances for complete desegregation in the near future are minimal. *Educational parks* require long-term investment and planning. A redistricting plan as successful as Berkeley's is a rare phenomenon. Many minority groups are beginning to openly express increased appreciation for their respective identities; this is reflected in growing pressure from some segments for separate schools. The desire for separate schools is not new; it reflects an acceptance

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● ● ● ● ● Schools in which only whites hold leadership positions are themselves examples of the difficulty blacks and other minorities have in obtaining economic and political equality. ● ● ● ● ●

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of the fact of pervasive separatist attitudes on the part of the white majority. Facing this fact and the reality of extensive ethnic segregation in the public schools, the argument is advanced that minority people should control minority-group schools. By decentralizing the bureaucracy that runs the school system, they hope to have more control over the kind of teaching their children will receive. Although most programs in compensatory education have proven to be less effective than desegregation, in lieu of better options, perhaps neighborhood control and better compensatory programs can combine to shift the balance decisively for the better — at least for awhile. Confounding the problem further is the rising tide of cultural nationalism and self-determination among several minority groups which is reflected in the demand for black education or Mexican education or Puerto Rican education for and by these groups. Until our planning for desegregation can come to terms with these attitudes and developments, our efforts may be frustrated by some members of the very populations we seek to serve, even if these efforts are not defeated by the more traditional sources of opposition.

Once a desegregation plan is put into effect, we are faced with the kinds of questions that Chesler, Jorgensen, and Erenberg's manual help us answer, namely, how do we bridge the gaps perpetuated by centuries of separation, misunderstanding and fear? How do we prepare teachers to work with students and each other in such a way that meets diverse needs, both academic and emotional? Chesler, Jorgensen, and Erenberg point out that courageous leadership from administrators and teachers can reduce tension and provide a model of wholesome racial attitudes and relationships. The courage to attempt new programs, to eradicate racism and to encourage acceptance and appreciation of individuals as individuals must come from the adult leadership or else tension and hostility can destroy the possibility of learning from racial and class interactions.

What is required for the proper utilization of these ideas is a commitment to work toward the achievement of a racially integrated society. Individuals must become sensitive to their own behavior and attitudes which may either facilitate or obstruct movement toward this goal, to the end that the facilitative behaviors and attitudes are increased, and those which are obstructive are eliminated. We must strive for the realization of pluralism rather than assimilation as the essential characteristic of a truly integrated society. To assimilate or amalgamate, and thus eclipse the unique characteristics of the many groups which make up our society, is just as destructive as to segregate or eliminate from social interaction the minority contributions. In a pluralistic society there is a respected position and role for all. Chesler, Jorgensen, and Erenberg indicate:

Unfortunately, racial integration is not widely present in our society. Practical experience with integration is so limited that most efforts to overcome racial isolation previously have aimed only at desegregation, not at the less easily attained state of integration. Black, brown and white people usually live and work together with disparities in treatment, prestige, income, and power. Under such circumstances, mixing people of different races constitutes physical desegregation, but does not necessarily bring equal advantage and outcome. In some places where blacks and whites work and live together, the underlying concern is that blacks fit into customary "white" patterns. Whites then tolerate or approve of minority members who behave according to these patterns. The term assimilation describes this attempt by the majority to deny, ignore, or change differences which it does not value.

This is a Review of Vol. III, *Integrating The Desegrated School,* a four part series on *Planning Educational Change.* The study was funded under Title IV of The Civil Rights Act through a contract with the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; Office of Education, Division of Equal Educational Opportunity. Volume III is available from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 20402 ($1.00). It can also be obtained in microfiche (MF) for $0.50 from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service. In ordering use the document's assigned ED number (ED042071); for additional ordering information, see page

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Planning Educational Change: Vol. I, *Technical Aspects of School Desegregation.* Washington, D.C., U.S. Office of Education, 1969. 33p. ED030216 GPO price $0.45 (OE – 38014)

Vol. II, *Human Resources in School Desegregation.* 1969. 46p. ED030217 GPO price $0.50 (OE – 38012)

Vol. IV, *How Five School Systems Desegregated.* 1969. 28p. ED030218 GPO price $0.40 (OE – 38013)

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School integration will not solve all of the racial problems rampant in our nation, but it is one of the primary requisites for America's realization of a just and egalitarian society. Black and brown parents who support and fight for desegregation and integration believe that their children receive inferior instructional services in segregated schools. White parents who fight for desegregation believe that their segregated children receive an unrealistic and harmful view of American society. The stigma of segregation corrodes the perspectives, expectations, and, in many cases, achievements of minority youngsters. But majority students, too, are disadvantaged by their segregated school experience. Prepared for an unreal version of our society, they only accumulate rather than confront, racial shibboleths.

(Planning Educational Change
Preface, pp. iii-iv)

FOOTNOTES

[1]For some of the research on effects of desegregation on academic achievement, see the following sources listed in the supplementary bibliography: Anderson, Banks, Clark (1953), Coleman (1966), Hansen, Katzenmeyer, Klineberg, Lee, Pettigrew (1968), St. John (1962), and Wilson

[2]See Irwin Katz's "Research on Public School Desegregation," *Integrated Education*, Weinberg, ed., Beverly Hills, The Glencoe Press, 1968, for a review of research on white resistance to desegregation.

[3]Pettigrew, Thomas F., "Complexity and Change in American Racial Patterns: A Social Psychological View," *Daedalus*, Fall, 1965.

[4]See Erik H. Erikson's article, "The Concept of Identity in Race Relations: Notes and Queries," *Daedalus*, Winter 1966, for discussion of black identity and comments on white attitudes toward blacks.

[5]See Herman R. Goldberg, "Metropolitan Planning for Education," *Integrated Education*, Weinberg, ed., Beverly Hills, The Glencoe Press, 1968.

[6]For discussions on school redistricting, see the following sources listed in the supplementary bibliography: Farrar, Purdy, and Minnesota University.

[7]Samuels, Gertrude, "How School Bussing Works in One Town," *The New York Times Magazine*, Sept. 27, 1970, Part I, p.38

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• • • • • The nature and organization of extracurricular activities, as well as the distribution of symbolic offices of the school are important indicators of the quality of integration. Extracurricular activities are sometimes dominated by members of a particular racial and cultural group. For an integrated situation it is imperative that clubs and associations be representative of the diverse school population. School-wide student councils, human relations councils, and similar organizations should have equal representation from all groups within the school. Only then can students view the councils' actions as reflecting fairly the interests of subgroups within the school. In a similar vein, the symbolic offices of a school (beauty queens and cheerleaders) are extremely important to students. Their composition symbolizes the acceptance or rejection of diversity by the faculty and student body. If these honorary roles are all white or all black in an interracial setting, it is evident to the minority students that they are not accepted, and they conclude that other students and faculty do not care if they succeed. • • • • •

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Stephen Wright, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor

B. L. Hamlar, M.A.
Research Associate

Barbara Wheeler, M.A.
Research Associate

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